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INFO RUCNCIS/CIS COLLECTIVE  
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RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 2137  
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 2002  
RUEHAK/AMEMBASSY ANKARA 4325  
RUEHIT/AMCONSUL ISTANBUL 2573  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC  
RUEHVEN/USMISSION USOSCE 2913  
RHMFIUU/CDR USCENCOM MACDILL AFB FL  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC  
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC  
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC

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SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

STATE FOR SCA/CEN, EUR/ACE, SCA/PPD, ECA  
AID/W FOR EE/EA

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [SCUL](#) [KPAO](#) [TX](#)

SUBJECT: TURKMENISTAN: NEWSPAPER HIGHLIGHTS USAID EDUCATION SUCCESS  
- BUT NOT USAID'S ROLE

¶1. (U) Sensitive but unclassified. Not for public Internet.

¶2. (SBU) SUMMARY: An article published on September 4 in Turkmenistan's leading daily (official) newspaper, "Neutral Turkmenistan," touted the achievements of teachers in Lebap province's School 11. The article stated that the school's teachers introduced interactive teaching methods and later provided support for their colleagues through city and regional seminars. In the past year, forty students from the mentioned school won awards in state and local competitions, the best results in the province. Although the article did not mention USAID's role in supporting this school's teachers, all 45 teachers at the school were trained on new methods of teaching through USAID's Participation, Education and Knowledge Sharing (PEAKS) education program, which concluded in ¶2007. In a telephone conversation with school director after the article's publication, the director told USAID FSN that the covered achievements in innovative teaching implementation were a direct result of the USAID/PEAKS project. END SUMMARY

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION NEVER RECOGNIZED PROGRAM

¶3. (SBU) USAID'S Participation, Education and Knowledge Sharing (PEAKS) education program focused in Turkmenistan on introducing interactive methods of teaching. Intensive efforts by USAID to establish cooperation with the Ministry of Education for implementation of USAID's PEAKS project were unsuccessful since the Ministry claimed that the program's methods were not new, but had existed even during the Soviet period.

¶4. (SBU) In reality, most schools in Turkmenistan used and still use traditional teaching methods which have only limited impact on student learning. Most rural schools were and still are not familiar with interactive teaching methods. Additionally, the Ministry has not acquired the materials and tools necessary to disseminate new methods throughout the country and has remained reluctant to adopt and promote such methods, preferring instead fancy, multimedia driven approaches.

¶5. (SBU) As a result, USAID chose to work with teachers, school directors and other stakeholders through local educational centers or other "neutral" venues. USAID/PEAKS developed and/or adapted

training materials in Russian and Turkmen language, built the capacity of local trainers to deliver student-centered teaching methods, and trained teachers and school administrators on these approaches. Despite the Ministry's lack of support, USAID provided training to over 1,200 teachers, 152 school directors and local education officials from 230 schools. Currently, more than ten percent of students in Turkmenistan are taught with new methods introduced by USAID/PEAKS.

¶6. (SBU) Due to strong cooperation with local partners in Lebap province, USAID/PEAKS trained teachers in 38 percent of schools in the province. In Galkynsh region, which has a student population of 14,400, USAID/PEAKS trained teachers in all the schools.

#### ARTICLE RECOGNIZES PEAKS' RESULTS - BUT NOT USAID'S ROLE

¶6. (SBU) The article, "Big Successes of a Small School", published in local newspaper "Neutral Turkmenistan" on September 04, 2008, highlighted the visible impact of the interactive methods of teaching employed by School 11's teachers. In the past year, forty students from the school won awards in state and local competitions, which were the best results in the province.

¶7. (SBU) Although the article did not mention USAID's role in supporting this school's teachers, all 45 teachers at the school were trained on new methods of teaching through USAID's Participation, Education and Knowledge Sharing (PEAKS) education program, which concluded in 2007. In a telephone conversation with the school director after the article's publication, the director told USAID FSN that the covered achievements in innovative teaching implementation were a direct result of the PEAKS project.

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¶8. (SBU) COMMENT: Even though the USAID/PEAKS project was never accepted by the Ministry, the implementing partner was able to establish relations with local entities that allowed it to operate successfully at the local level. Significantly, the project's results were recognized by the education officials who approved the publication of this article about the teachers' achievements in using interactive methods of teaching. USAID submitted a draft Letter of Mutual Understanding to the Ministry on July 31 that proposed formal cooperation to increase the quality of in-service and pre-service training available to Turkmenistan's teachers. Upon receipt of a positive response, USAID is ready to quickly expand the types of trainings with the National Institute of Education and other relevant entities that have been field-tested and proven effective in Turkmenistan over the past four years. END COMMENT.

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